



SOUTHEAST NEWS

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“The Tree Bears The Fruit” Southeast Conference Annual Meeting June 13-15, 1997

The above is the theme for our Southeast Conference Annual Meeting this year, which will be held at Shocco Springs Conference Center in Talladega, Alabama, June 13-15. In highlighting Christian Education, we sought out Dr. Charles R. (Chuck) Foster, Professor of Religion and Education at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, to be our keynote speaker. Dr. Foster has a Bachelor of Divinity in Religious Education as well as a Doctorate of Education, in History of Education. He is an Ordained Elder in the Oregon-Idaho Conference of the United Methodist Church. Well known in the field of Christian education, Dr. Foster has several publications to his credit. Just to mention a few of the titles: *Embracing Diversity: Leading Multicultural Congregations*, *We are the Church Together: Cultural Diversity in Congregational Life*, *Working with Black Youth: Opportunities for Ministry*, *Educating Congregations: The Future of Christian Education*.

In speaking with Dr. Foster, I particularly enjoyed his conversation about a fresh approach to make Christian education relevant to our church situations today. He has done many workshops all around the world, even to the Fiji Islands and New South Wales. Most of his workshops center on revisioning our church education to encourage walking the Christ-walk in our pluralistic society. I have spoken with persons who have attended his classes and his workshops and they have found him both stimulating and easy listening—a person with an eye to the present and the future who is alive with the message of the Gospel and who is continually seeking ways to bring the living of the message of Love into reality through our Christian educational opportunities. We are excited and pleased that Dr. Foster is coming to share his visions and his “walk” with us.

Please note: This year's Annual Meeting is a fresh approach and combines our regular style and Faith Works.

Friday night – Business meeting and opening worship

Saturday A.M. – Morning Worship and Workshops

Saturday P.M. – Service of Recognition and Workshop

Saturday evening entertainment – “Embracing the Musical Diversity of the Southeast Conference:

Sunday morning – Business meeting and closing worship

We are excited about this arrangement and hope that all churches will have excellent representation of non-delegates as well as delegates.

General Synod XXI

“For the Healing of the Nations”

July 3-8, 1997

Every two years, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ meets to conduct the business of the denomination, to worship, study the Bible and pray together. As with our Annual Meetings of the Southeast Conference, all are welcome to attend, enjoy the fellowship and become more directly informed about the issues we all face as Christians and as members of the United Church of Christ. This year, the meeting is being held in Columbus, Ohio, Thursday through Tuesday, over the July 4th weekend. We encourage your attendance!

The theme, “For the Healing of the Nations,” inspired by Revelation 22:1-5, was selected to focus on the Pronouncement adopted by the XIXth General Synod, calling the United Church of Christ to become a multiracial and multicultural church. The Bible studies will be led by the Rev. Wesley Ariarajoh, Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and a Methodist pastor from Sri Lanka.

The Sunday morning plenary, “Color of Fear,” is based on a powerful video of the same title, produced by Lee Mun Wah, a Chinese-American community therapist practicing in Oakland, California. Appearing on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* in 1995, he highlighted how he uses the video in his commitment and work to engage persons of different races and cultures in honest open conversations about race and racism. Lee Mun Wah will be present with us to help process this experience, making this a wonderful opportunity to allow us to move beyond the usual surface conversations about race to a level of discussion about racism that we rarely experience.

Another highlight to Synod will be the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who will sing for worship on Saturday night as well as present a concert just prior to the Sunday afternoon community-wide worship. The Fisk Jubilee Singers sang at the National Council of the Congregational Churches in 1872 in Oberlin, Ohio, which makes this the 125th anniversary of that initial appearance. Their presence at Synod is a culminating event of the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the American Missionary Association.

Registration forms are available through the Conference Office.

Five Nominees for General Synod Elections

Our support goes to Holly Nelson, Nashville, Howard UCC, nominee for Executive Council; Elizabeth Clement, Atlanta, First Congregational, and Ed Schneider, pastor, Pleasant Hill, Community Church, nominees for United Church Board for Homeland Ministries; and Donald Clark, Pleasant Hill, Community Church, and Terry Davis, Montgomery, Community Congregational, nominees for United Church Board for World Ministries. These nominees will be on the ballot at General Synod XXI! Good luck!

One of our own goes National!

Barbara Everett and husband, Duncan, are now in Cleveland! Barbara has accepted a position on National staff of the United Church of Christ as “Associate Director of Special Giving.” Congratulations, Barbara! She will also be the person to follow up for the Make A Difference campaign.

Barbara has been very active while living in the Southeast Conference, both in the Conference and in the Alabama-Tennessee Association, as well as within her own church. Her most recent involvement at the Conference level was to successfully co-chair, with Milton Hurst, the Search Committee for a new conference minister. Didn't they do a fantastic job?!

We will all miss Barbara's direct involvement, but support her wholeheartedly in her new endeavor. The United Church of Christ will be all the better for her being on the National staff!

While talking with Barbara to clarify her title, she asked me to say to you that she will be “forever grateful for the marvelous people of the Southeast Conference and looks for continuing relationships.” Her new

address: 2115 Chesterland Avenue, Lakewood, OH 44107; phone number: (216) 228-4258.

Letter from the Conference Minister

Dear Friends,

As we prepare to gather for the Annual Meeting of the Conference at Shocco Springs on June 13-15, 1997, you are witnessing our Southeast Conference taking the first steps toward a new model of being together. We will gather to equip you in your local churches for the renewal of one aspect of your ministries, in this instance, your Christian Education ministries. We are looking forward to seeing how this new model works.

Our hope is that all those who come to join us at Shocco Springs will go away with new understandings on how to do effective Christian Education for both children and adults in churches of all sizes, and a clarity about the resources that are available through the United Church of Christ to do those ministries. In addition to our excellent keynote speaker, Charles Foster, and our workshops, we also plan times for celebration and worship on Friday night, Saturday and Sunday morning, as well as an introduction to the musical traditions of the Southeast Conference on Saturday night led by the incomparable Milton Hurst.

Our Annual Meeting will be much more than business, it will be a gathering of our family of faith. We hope that you will promote this gathering actively, at the life of your congregations, that you, yourself, will circle the date on your calendar, and make every effort to come whatever distance to be a part of our celebration!

In Christ,
Timothy C. Downs
Conference Minister

Report of the Moderator

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: Ecclesiastes 3:1

What a challenging and rewarding season for me—one year as Moderator of the Southeast Conference. My year began at the same Annual Meeting in June 1996, that the Conference membership, under the leadership of the Rev. Dick Sales, Moderator, accepted the unanimous vote for the Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Downs to be our conference minister. Of course, a highlight of the season was Tim's installation of service, March

1997. Working with Tim and the Board of Directors has been very stimulating; a time to look back and forward at the same time. While we are moving forward to implement the new staffing plan and assure adequate staffing for the Southeast Conference, in the office and to meet the needs of associations/local churches, changes to the Bylaws have been placed on hold at this time. Holly Nelson, chairperson of the Personnel Committee, has worked arduously with Tim to assure job descriptions and other matters are in place to fully implement the staffing plan. Thank you.

I was pleased to represent the Southeast Conference at Pilgrim Congregational Church, Birmingham during a combined worship service that also included First Congregational, Birmingham and First Congregational, Talladega. President Paul Sherry was the worship leader during the service. After worship, members had the opportunity to have dialog with the President.

Another event that was special for me was working with the Rev. Elaine Rasco, chaplain and counselor, to conduct a workshops on the topic "Woven Together in Love" for the Alabama/Tennessee Association, Women in Church and Society at the Pilgrim Congregational Church, Birmingham, in August 1996.

A special window of opportunity came my way in my work world—52 young people and their 5 advisors from Heritage United Church of Christ, Baltimore, Maryland, under the leadership of Dr. Anne Emery, an active lay leader of the Church, visited Meharry Medical College during spring break, March 1997, and requested that I talk to them about the Southeast Conference and historically black colleges related to the United Church of Christ—a special time.

During this season we, the Board of Directors, working with our conference minister have focused on gathering information from members in the local churches and associations including members serving in varied capacities in the national Church to begin to focus on a strategic plan that will guide our conference as we move forward to the 21st century. In addition, it is our plan to garner support from these leaders to have more hands to do the work of the Conference. Some selected activities: (1) responding with both financial and human support to burned churches, (2) increasing our financial support to OCWM, (3) expanding ecumenical partnerships, (4) continuing to address issues related to the Retreat Center and (5) under the leadership of Mrs. Connie Moorner and the dynamic members of her committee, mostly individuals from the local churches in Birmingham and Talladega, planning an Annual Meeting that will broaden your Christian Education knowledge, enrich your music background,

rejuvenate your faith and be a time of real celebration for us in the Southeast Conference. As you may recall, the Christian Education theme for the 1997 Annual Meeting is as a result of resolution approved at the 1996 Annual Meeting presented by Mrs. Louise Sallstrom, Commission on Christian Education. Thank you, Louise.

Throughout the *Southeast News* you will read about the many other challenges and opportunities that have come our way during this season. Much work has been accomplished and much more will be—must be accomplished as all of us use our hands to make a difference: a real sense of excitement as we too grow in our faith and discipleship.

A special thank you to all of the members of the Board of Directors, especially David Speno and Steve Parker, who worked so hard to keep our funds in order; commission leaders like James Myers, Church and Ministry; Dorothy Gager, Social Justice, and Edward Schneider, with so many issues on his plate with Church Development and Evangelism—all of you named and unnamed; all *ad hoc* committee leaders, Southeast Conference staff, especially Nan Wright, local churches and association members for your support. I would be remiss if I didn't single out that special group of women in the Southeast Conference under the leadership of Rev. Joyce Myers Brown, Women in Society, for their continual work; the Women's Retreat September 20-22, theme: "For Such a Time as This," was both stimulating and rewarding. The Southeast Conference is us—you and me. Together we can make a real difference where we are. God bless each of you.

Annie W. Neal

News from Missionaries

Karl & Jan Whiteman

Jan has been working hard with her teaching challenges this year, and there have been many, from little or no books to a lack of importance being placed on their education. This is her summary from the quarter just passed, as she continues to teach English to children. *"I'm seeing results! These kids are understanding what I've been trying to teach them! WOW! It's really hard when you don't have the proper books, etc.! ... Thank God for the blackboard and chalk!! ... My 6th grade class is doing so much better! But I'm noticing a big improvement with my other grades as well! When I finished report grades for the 3rd marking period. I was happy to see the grades go up—numerically. Even though some of them still have 'Fs,' they are no longer '0' Fs—but rather '40s' and '50s' Fs. This is a big improvement! I know this must be hard to fathom, but it is measurable for me. I've had to convince the students*

how much better they are doing. To them an 'F' is still an 'F,' but I explain that they are doing so much better & they just have to continue ... There is little accountability at this school, and even those that have failed will graduate or move up to the next grade ... On the positive side, as I look back on this first year, I note much progress. Girls are especially shy here as they approach their teens. (At first,) some would never speak to me directly. Now they have to be reminded to raise their hands to speak. They have increased their vocabularies and continue to learn how to use the newly learned words in speaking & writing. They especially enjoy playing game like 'Boggle, Jr.,' 'Scrabble, Jr.,' & 'Go, Fish' (using letters to spell words), and others that help them learn English in a 'FUN' way. My Marshallese has improved also."

Karl has been "almost non-stop" since Christmas. He was asked to represent the UCC and CGMB at the state funeral for the President of the Marshall of the Marshall Islands (He and Jan attended). Karl has also been writing grant proposals for a computer lab at Rita Christian Elementary School (UCC) for 1998. He taught a 2-week course on the "Life and Ministry of Jesus" at the Theological College of the Marshall Islands, our UCC training school there, then went to Tahiti for the 7th Assembly of the Pacific Conference of Churches (they function much like the World Council of Churches). He stopped at Hawaii and went to be with the leaders of a Marshallese community in Honolulu, then spent 2 days working with the newly formed Marshallese congregation on the island of Maui—a very advantageous time for all concerned. *"The Maui congregation is struggling between the old (Marshallese Church) traditions and the new life they now lead in Hawaii ... Many Pacific Islanders face a unique/complex set of problems & cultural conflicts when they are out of their traditional surroundings. Please pray for 'the stranger in the strange land,' and check with your conference office to see if there are Pacific peoples (or others) that you or your congregation might welcome in Christ's name."*

Karl is joyously writing a bi-weekly newsletter article in the *Marshall Islands Journal* ... He is now approached almost daily by people of many denominations. Through these articles, many interesting relationships have developed. Being the only "ecumenically appointed missionaries" in the Marshalls, the articles have allowed Karl to sometimes be a "Nathan" & to have a prophetic voice where there has been none before. God is using this avenue to open up dialogue & doors between churches, missionaries, government, community groups & the business community.

Karl and Jan thank each of you for your continued prayer support, and ask that you pray for their health and strength, for the people they serve, and for the Holy Spirit to be a living flame of renewal in the life of

the churches there & at home. They love to receive mail from us. Remember—32 cents is all you need. Their address: P.O. Box 3278, Majuro, MH 96960-3278. Phone: 011 (692) 625-7416. Fax: 011 (692) 625-7427.

Annual Report of the Conference Minister

Dear Friends,

What a zesty and motley gathering we are here in the Southeast Conference! In the Call to Worship at my service of installation on March 2nd we said together, “We have gathered here from the clay hills of Tennessee to the piney woods of Alabama, from the Carolina lowlands and over the muddy waters of the Chattahoochee, from North and South, from East and West, we have gathered to lift our voices in song and praise for you, O God, whose faithfulness has stretched from generation to generation, whose love has sought us out and gathered us in.” In those words we named our diversity but also named our unity as we seek to respond faithfully to the God who has been faithful to us.

My first year with you has been wonderful. I have tried to listen carefully to you in your congregations seeking to discern your hopes and dreams. As we begin to develop a staff structure, both in the office and in the dispersed program staff we hope to respond to these dreams. It has been wonderful this year to preach in your worship services, meet with your councils, congregations and search committees, and become acquainted with your pastors and lay people. Through the work of search committees in many congregations and the Church and Ministry committees in the associations, as well as the commissions and committees of the Conference I have come to know you better.

As I write this letter we have just taken a significant step in the restructuring of the Conference office by hiring the administrative assistant and the instituting of a second part-time position, the assistant for Conference staff support. Once the office is functioning efficiently we will begin to introduce new computer hardware and software as well as Internet capacity. In consultation with the Personnel Committee I am starting the process of seeking the one-third-time Conference associate positions. Our goals will be to have these people in place in time to be introduced at the Annual Meeting of the Conference in June.

I believe that the Southeast Conference is one the threshold of exciting new possibilities. Having just met with the Finance Committee and reviewed the proposed budgets for 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 I recognize

that these new things come at a price. For 1997 we are budgeting an increase of just over 20% in Our Church's Wider Mission. I believe that in the next half year, you, the local congregations of the Southeast Conference, will begin to see both a qualitative and quantitative improvement in the services, resources and staffing that are available from the Conference, and will as a result stretch financially to help us extend ourselves not only to you but to all the congregations we serve. This is not only a threshold of excitement but a threshold of risk. As Conference Minister, I have every confidence that we can rise to the challenges before us, and as I said at my service of installation, "there is yet more truth and light to break forth out of the Southeast Conference."

No report from me would be complete without a word of thanks to the excellent leadership of the Conference: Annie Neal, the moderator, who combines effectiveness, efficiency and grace, Susan Ewing, secretary, who has diligently served her term, and Dave Speno, treasurer, who has brought new order and clarity to the finances of the Conference, and to all who serve on the Board of Directors as well as those who serve through their association. My thanks too, to the office staff, Nan Wright and Adrienne Laraway, who have not only endured, but prevailed in this time of tumultuous change, and to Gerri Hudson, recently hired as administrative assistant, who, with zeal and commitment entered the labyrinth of our Conference and is beginning to make sense of it all.

Thank you for joining me in this new journey, for calling me to serve with you, and for being faithful vessels of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy C. Downs, Conference Minister

Mini-Camp 1997

A huge success—accolades to Bill Lloyd for his leadership in organizing this event sponsored by the East Alabama/West Georgia Association.

Over 100 youth and adults attended.

Jimmy Pilkington and crew cooked.

LaGrange won Silver Surfer award!

Tim Downs preached.

Doug Stroup led music.

1998 dates: April 17, 18, 19.

This annual event of sun, surf, sand, and Savior is worthy of your consideration for next April. It will again be held at Noah's Ark Retreat Center in Panama City Beach, Florida. We would like to see the enrollment

at least doubled, so more youth and adults can enjoy this opportunity to grow spiritually while “playing” at the seashore!

Bill Lloyd did a fantastic job of organizing and coordinating Mini-Camp 1997. Bill is also going to coordinate the youth activities for our Annual Meeting at Shocco Springs this year.

Thanks to all who helped make this event a success!

Annual Report:

Commission on Church and Ministry

Submitted by James Myers, Chairperson

This Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference, June 13-15, 1997, will climax my tenure as chairperson of the Commission on Church and Ministry. I have greatly enjoyed this period of service and prized the privilege of trying, in some small way, to add to the effectiveness of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.

We did not reach all of our goals, but we believe the newly elected and continuing leaders from the respective associations of the Conference will work together; making sure that the purposes and goals adopted for our ongoing missions and ministries will be achieved with the help of God.

I wish to thank our conference minister, the Reverend Dr. Timothy Downs, for this complete support and cooperation. He gives lavishly of his time and effort. His sincerity and integrity have earned him the respect and admiration of all of us.

May Almighty God continue to give us strength and wisdom to fulfill our responsibilities to God, Church, and humankind.

Annual Report:

Personnel Committee

Submitted by Holly Nelson, Chairperson

This has been an exciting year in which to serve the Southeast Conference. It has been a year of listening to the people of the Conference as they articulated their needs and dreams for the realities of our actual and potential Conference resources. Tim initiated this process with each of the associations in the fall. With this as a base, the Personnel Committee began to design the role descriptions of each of our Conference personnel positions. The following positions and job descriptions were approved by the Board of Directors at the January meeting. We anticipate interviewing

persons for each of these positions during April and May, and hope to be able to present candidates to the Board by the time of the Annual Meeting in June.

Conference Office Staff: Administrative Assistant and Assistant for Conference Staff. (There were no revisions made at this time to the position of Bookkeeper.)

Administrative Assistant: This full-time position will coordinate all office work. She/he will have good organizational and computer skills, and will develop our office computerization. We will be working with a computer consultant to propose hardware and software which will ultimately streamline and simplify the keeping of records, communication, etc.

Assistant for Conference Staff: This part-time position will maintain the calendars of the Conference Minister and the three Conference Associates, coordinate logistics and travel for these persons, and coordinate requests for information and resources needed by/from each Conference staff person. This position will also edit the *Southeast News* and function as receptionist, as time allows.

Conference Associates: (One-third-time positions, located in different geographical regions of the Conference. Ordination is not a requirement for these positions.)

Each of the following one-third-time Conference Associate positions will be responsible for enhancing communication between churches, and between churches and the Conference, in the geographical area in which they serve. In addition, each Conference Associate will be a resource in his/her specific area of expertise, for all the churches in the Conference. These resource areas of expertise came out of conversations that took place in your association annual meetings, where you spoke about what the churches would like the Conference to provide in the way of support. These “resource areas” are:

Conference Associate for Spiritual Development and Community Building: This Conference Associate will nurture spiritual development, theological reflection, and the building of community among clergy, laity, and congregations in the Conference.

Conference Associate for Congregational Renewal and Development: This Conference Associate will resource congregations as they seek to promote renewal of their own ministries and program *within* their church. This person will also provide resources to small groups of persons who desire to meet as seed communities, small group fellowship, or to focus on a particular subject or issue.

Conference Associate for Mission Development and Identity: This Conference Associate will help congregations promote the United Church of Christ identity in their community. She/he will work with congregations and ecumenical partnerships in developing ministries to needs beyond the congregation, both locally and nationally. A goal of this position is to enable congregations to enhance the connection between their church and their local communities, and between their church and the UCC across the country.

We are excited about the possibilities of these new positions. Included in each associate's charge will be the expectation that resources/projects/workshops, etc. will be multigenerational, that our children and young people be included creatively and purposefully. Rather than approach youth work as a separate entity, our goal is to enlarge the sense of family by broadening the scope of all that is planned so that it invites the gifts and resources of persons of many ages. That is, Christian education is a life-long necessity; mission and nurture of congregations can be a project for persons of all ages; community building necessarily includes all persons. Included also is the charge that social justice and witness is an intrinsic part of our theological understanding, and must become "the water we swim in" rather than a bracketed aspect of our work together. Hence, these two important needs and dreams of the Conference must be an integral part of each of the position descriptions of the Conference Associates.

The Personnel Committee expresses heartfelt thanks of the Conference to Nan Wright and Tim Downs for all the creative and forthright work they have done, together and with us, during this year of planning, organizing, recruiting, and learning to work together towards our shared future. Thank you!

Committee members: Holly Nelson, Roy Bain, Larry Calbert, Annette Nielsen, Paula Van Natta.

Annual Report:

Iowa-Southeast Conference

Partnership Committee

Respectfully submitted by Charlie Lord

Members: Elizabeth Clement and Charlie Lord, co-chairs;
Trudy Braun, Ben Welch.

Mert and Evie Fedderson brought greetings and gifts from Iowa Conference to the 1996 Southeast Conference Annual Meeting, then they, with eleven people from the Southeast Conference, traveled to Pilgrim Heights campground in Iowa and worked a week with ten others from Iowa to repair, paint and spruce up the campground and add a nine-hole disc golf course! Following the work camp, Dick and Trudy Braun plus Joy and Charlie Lord attended the Iowa Conference Annual Meeting at Grinnell College, where they gave greetings and gifts. The Lords attended church on June 9 at Maquoketa UCC, a partnership church with Pleasant Hill Community Church.

January 19-25, 1997, fourteen people from the Crossville area traveled to Estill, South Carolina, to set up work camp and help rebuild First Thankful Baptist Church, one of the black churches which had been burned. We invited the Iowa folk to share in it, but they felt it was just too distant. We had a great experience of Christian love and sharing in Estill, and surprised them with what “old folks” could do. April 6, seven of us traveled back to First Thankful for their “Marching In” ceremony—a very moving experience.

March 21-27, a group of 15 youth and 5 adults, including pastor, Belva Duncan, from Maquoketa UCC, Iowa, made a work camp visit to their partner church, Pleasant Hill Community, and shared in the Sunday service. They worked at the church and for Uplands people at their homes cleaning and fixing up, making a great contribution.

This June, right after the Southeast and Iowa conference annual meetings, both to be held June 13-15, some of us from the Southeast Conference will join a crew from Iowa for a work camp at Tunica, MS. The Iowa Conference people are calling it “A Roof for Rosie.” Rosie is a middle-aged African-American single mother with four sons and three grandsons living with her in a tumble-down shack. Habitat for Humanity has donated a plot and cement slab and utility connections, but feel that is all they can do. Iowa is trying to raise \$19,000 for building materials. They have an arrangement with Habitat for campers to sleep 25 miles south of Tunica for \$5.00 per night, and Iowa Conference will furnish insurance for anyone for 30 cents a day. We hope people from our conference, especially Mississippi and Alabama, will join in this effort to give this family a decent place to live. Work is expected to start June 16, but will continue for weeks after that. Please contact Elizabeth Clement or Charlie Lord if you would like to take part.

There has been real “bonding” of Christian love and shared work and concern among some people from Iowa and some people from Southeast.

We invite all of you to experience this in the future, as you may be led by our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Rosie's Response to Roof Raising (from Iowa Conference)

Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Barnes.

How is everyone doing? Fine, I hope. We are OK here. I got your letter. Every time I think about my house I jump for joy and am happy. I never thought everything like this would happen like this to me. I am so happy. When we get start, we be there all day every day. From start to end, we be there. Prayers do come true. Prayer and friends, they watch over us. When I told the children, they was so glad. The boys are happy. They ready to go ... I am too ... the Lord (is with) you all and thank you all very much. Love you all. From Rosie.

Annual Report: Commission on Christian Social Justice

Submitted by Dorothy H. Gager, Chair

The Commission on Christian Social Justice, composed of two at-large members and the chairs of the association's committees on Christian Social Justice, has continued its efforts to inform and unite those within the Southeast Conference who are interested in matters of Christian social justice. This is achieved mainly by the publication of the *Social Justice Networker*, which is distributed to those with an expressed interest in such issues.

In addition, the Commission acts as steward for the portions of the Hunger Action and Just Peace offerings that are retained on the Conference level. Each spring, proposals are solicited and the Commission determines how to allocate the funds available. Checks are presented at the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting each spring.

In the past year, members of the Commission encouraged participation and provided local leadership in the national UCC teleconference on the Religious Right. Association committees have continued their efforts to implement and encourage social justice programs.

We are in the process of evaluating the most effective way of communicating within the Conference, experimenting with the use of the *Southeast News* for publishing the content usually contained in the *Social Justice Newsletter*.

Annual Report: Commission on Women in Church and Society

Submitted by Joyce Myers-Brown, Chairperson

United Church of Christ women in our Southeast Conference are women in mission—women engaged in reaching out to others to share Christ's love in concrete ways in their churches, communities and beyond. They are also women concerned with justice for all. The Commission on Women in Church and Society seeks to provide resources and programs for churches and leaders dealing with women's concerns and issues in the light of the Gospel.

During the year we held two commission meetings and also were in touch by phone and letter. Our major undertaking was the biennial Southeast Conference Women's Retreat held September 20-22, 1996 at Shocco Springs, Talladega, AL. It was an inspiring and challenging experience for the 80 women who gathered under the theme, "For Such A Time As This" (Esther 4:14). Our special thanks to Kathryn Robinson and Nancy Sales who ably co-chaired the retreat planning team.

Some 12-15 women and men from our conference traveled to Boston, Massachusetts, June 27-30, to attend the Third National UCC Women's Meeting which focused on "Visions and Voices." A rich experience for all.

During the program year women gathered at the association level for several meaningful events: Alabama/Tennessee Association—an August gathering at Pilgrim Congregational, Birmingham, under the theme, "Woven Together in Love;" East Alabama/West Georgia—an annual retreat at SIFAT (Servants in Faith and Technology) in August, focusing on the Esther passage, "For Such A Time As This," and a Spring Rally in April '97 at Lanett Congregational Christian Church to reflect on the "Journey to Faith;" Georgia/South Carolina Association—the Women's Fellowship of Central Congregational UCC hosted the women of the Metro Atlanta Cluster in May for a rich evening together.

Throughout the Conference a number of churches celebrated UCC Women's Week in February following the theme, "Healing Visions." We urge all Southeast Conference churches to plan for this week next February, using resources found in *Common Lot*. We also urge women and women's groups to become partners in UCCWM (United Church of Christ

Women in Mission), which provides a subscription to *Common Lot* and a number of other helpful materials.

During the year, the Women's Mite received gifts (suggested five cents per day per woman—\$18.15 per year) and distributed scholarship aid for women to attend leadership events. We hope more women will become aware of this fund and apply for such aid if needed.

During the winter the Commission received nominations for the "Gifts of Laywomen" awards and chose three outstanding laywomen to be honored by the Coordinating Center for Women at General Synod XXI in Columbus, Ohio on July 6, 1997. They are: Annie Neal of Nashville, Ruth Peeples of Pleasant Hill and Nancy Sales of Birmingham. We celebrate their gifts!

September 26-28, 1997, will be the next *Southern Regional UCC Women's Meeting*. It will be held at BRAG (a UCC retreat center) in *Blowing Rock, NC* with the theme, "Strangers No More" (Ephesians 2:19-22). Do plan to attend!

Women throughout our Conference have worked for justice for all and have studied, and struggled with, issues of violence against women, women in prison, the "Sandwich Generation," etc. We also continue efforts to increase the number of women in leadership positions in all settings of our Church.

Please contact the Women's Commission with questions, suggestions or offers of help in regard to any concern or program.

Annual Report: Commission on Church Development & Evangelism Submitted by Ed Schneider, Chair

The task of the Commission on Church Development and Evangelism of the Southeast Conference is to aid in the establishment of new churches, the renewal of existing churches who experience a fresh movement of the Holy Spirit in their midst and the relocation of churches who feel led to a new place for a new ministry. In accomplishing this task, our primary relationship is with those groups of God's people, gathered by the call of the Spirit into a community of believers, ready to give time, energy and money to the church. The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ. The people are the living stones of which the church is built. And this comes together around a leader who is spiritually alert, energetic, committed to

the church and oriented to the ministry of building the body of Christ. By the grace of God there are such people!

Our secondary relationship of importance is with the Division of Evangelism and Local Church Development of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, an important source of experience and expertise as well as the source for much of the funding needed to accomplish our task. We are most grateful for this support.

Report on our present projects:

Columbia, South Carolina: people have come together in Covenant United Church of Christ under the leadership of the Rev. Nancy Donny. Though relatively few in number, the congregation has vitality, and two members are in seminary working toward a Master of Divinity and ordination. Covenant has just completed its one year as an exploratory model and has now received funding for a three-year period!

Macon, Georgia: The Heart of Georgia Fellowship is a small but loyal group who meet weekly under the leadership of Lester Ariail. They are in the process of exploring new directions.

Chattanooga, Tennessee: Sheares Memorial Church drew their church life to a conclusion in March 1997.

South DeKalb County and Peachtree City in Georgia continue to be under study for possible new church starts.

Montgomery, Alabama: there is a lively initiative for a new church, Community Congregational UCC, that began with a nucleus of new members, and very quickly went on to be formally received and celebrated as a church in the United Church of Christ on December 15, 1996. The Rev. Bennie Liggins, now a military chaplain, serves as the pastor and expects to take on full-time ministry when he completes his time in the service in one year.

In January 1997, we held a workshop at Central Church in Atlanta with Steve Gifford from the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to explore the diverse nature of new church congregations. It was an excellent workshop and information gathering session for all who attended. Those who attended requested that we have this kind of a gathering on a regular basis for the new church congregation leaders.

I want to thank and honor Tim Downs who has labored intensely since his arrival as Conference Minister, attending meetings and traveling the Conference to become deeply familiar with the various site of church development in the Southeast Conference, UCC.

Commission members are Jeanie Harry, '97; Flora Wilson Bridges, '96; Peg Muenstermann – AL/TN; David Naglee – EAL/WGA; Joe Brown – SAL/NWFL.

Commission on Christian Education

Submitted by Louise Sallstrom, Chair

The Commission on Christian Education has met twice via conference calls, discussing ways in which each association chair can communicate more effectively with the local congregations. Our goals are to be knowledgeable of Christian Education programs in our Conference, to learn the curriculum and resource needs so we can be more helpful to local churches, and to publicize what the churches are doing to promote Christian Education and their Christian educators. We are currently concerned with locating all religious educators in the Southeast Conference who are certified in Christian Education. Our current projects include researching and reporting Advent/Christmas activities in local churches; gathering demographic information from local church C.E. chairs so we can give appropriate support; reporting ecumenical activities; publicizing the Mini-Camp of EAL/WGA (April); doing publicly and thank-you follow-up letters for SEC Annual Meeting '97; and deciding on theme for Christian Education Week. The next *Lamplighter* focus: summer activities for youth and new resources that have been published.

The Commission has accomplished the following since February of 1996. Newsletters, *The Lamplighter*, 6 editions; mailed Advent and Lenten booklets; mailed resource packet containing 100 + craft projects & activities for Church or Vacation Bible School; conducted workshops at Conference and association annual meetings; displayed Christian Education resources at Conference Annual Meeting, Milledgeville "Welcome Weekend" for Tim Downs, GA/SC Annual Meeting, and Conference Women's Retreat; proposed Christian Education resolutions devoting this year to publicizing and promoting Christian Education with '97 Annual Meeting devoted to Christian Education (3 of our Commission members are serving on the Planning Committee for the Annual Meeting; bought all UCC Christian Education materials and many Disciples publications to supplement UCC resources.

On March 1, I sent to all C.E. commissioners a questionnaire for local church information; a description of C.E. chairs' responsibilities for local, association and Conference levels; an article on how to publish church newsletters; an overview of the responsibilities of the chair of any group; a

list of all commissioners with names and addresses plus a reminder of a conference call meeting scheduled for March 15 to confirm progress on contacting churches, and to discuss Vacation Bible School and camps and retreats for youth. This meeting did not take place because none of the commissioners were free to talk at the appointed time.

In closing, I would like to thank Ed Mehlhaff and Tim Downs for their excellent help and supporting words. I have learned a lot during my tenure on the Board. It is clear to me that there are wonderful, caring, and devoted Christians on the Board of Directors of the Southeast Conference. As you see from the previous paragraph it is extremely difficult to convene meetings of commissions. This is a major problem since we all have been given gifts which, when woven together, give strength to the fabric of any organization and health to the soul of the body. When one plans for meetings and reminds constituents and yet no one responds, it is quite hurtful to the spirit of the planner, and it is a setback to the momentum of the group. It is my hope and prayer that in the future, there will be a way of communicating the importance of the word that we do, the need for ALL to be included in the body of the Southeast Conference, and how crucial it is to get committed participants who will take seriously the responsibility that is theirs. Should we be any less conscientious or accountable since the price has been paid for us instead of the cost coming out of our paychecks?

Annual Report:

Stewardship and OCWM Commission

Submitted by Bob Kurtz, Chair

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.”

Matthew 4:1

Our Lord was tempted in all ways, just as we are, yet was without sin. That truth is taught in Sunday School and in Catechism classes and applies so strongly to stewardship. We are often tempted. We abuse our power. We eat too much. We drink too much. We spend too much on ourselves. We give away far too little of ourselves, our time and our money.

Jesus was our perfect example. Our Lord was a faithful steward. The Christian faith walk is a stewardship walk. *The depth of our commitment to Christ and His way is almost always reflected by our stewardship.*

In our Southeast Conference, we are issuing a challenge opportunity to our churches. Is your church a tithing church? Does your church tithe

10% of its budget to “Our Church’s Wider Mission?” Do you and your church know that the national guidelines suggest 25%?

Life in the Southeast Conference is exciting these days. We are moving forward! We are pleased to announce that “Our Church’s Wider Mission” giving has increased 13% in 1996, and we are looking forward to a further growth of 20% (or more) in 1997 with your commitment and your prayers.

As this is going into the *Southeast News*, the OCWM “Thank You” certificates for 1996 are being printed. We apologize the churches of the Conference for the absence of these certificates for the past couple of years. You should have your current ones by the Annual Meeting.

The Graham Cluster gathering of the United Church of Christ met in April at St. Simons Island. It is my pleasure to share with you that Tim Downs (Conference Minister) and Tim Morrison (Pastor, Pilgrimage, Marietta) were resource persons at this meeting. Mary Brueggemann (Interim Associate Pastor, Central Congregational, Atlanta) was present as our regional representative for Stewardship and OCWM, and Bennie Liggins (Pastor, Community Congregational, Montgomery) and I were also present for the gathering. This stewardship meeting gives direction and guidance to our various conferences and communicates the needs and purposes of our national bodies. The Graham Cluster consists of the Puerto Rico, Southern, South Central, Southeast and Florida conferences.

A new day is dawning in our beloved Conference. Our Lord is our example. His love and selflessness is perfect stewardship embodied!

Respectfully submitted, Bob Kurtz

Annual Report: Finance Committee

Once again I bring *greetings* from the Finance Committee and *good news* regarding the financial position of the Southeast Conference U.C.C. Let me first begin by congratulating all of the member U.C.C. stewardship committees, and their supporting congregations for their fine work, and diligent support they have shown year after year. Last year represented new challenges that the Finance Committee, along with the help of the Conference Board had to overcome.

With the arrival of our new conference minister a financial review for years 1994 and 1995 of the Conference was prepared and submitted to the Board in our September quarterly meeting by representatives from Imler, Hyatt, Ott and Blount. It was also recommended and unanimously approved at that meeting, that the S.E.C. continue our relationship with

them for future financial reviews and other matters that pertain to proper accounting methods. This past year also required full Board member participation in most financial concerns for the Southeast Conference.

As with other years, 1996 was a year in which the Finance Committee witnessed much prayer and hard work. While we ended the year on a positive note, belt tightening and keeping a close eye on our expenses was our main concern. In an effort to control travel expenses for the Conference Minister, a new automobile was purchased. This has already proven a much-needed asset to our Conference.

While we were delighted that OCWM support in 1996 was 11% more than we received the previous year, we fell short of reaching the income goals budgeted for 1996. We were blessed that our investment income continued to show positive results due to the strength of the financial markets. In this coming year one of the goals that the Southeast Conference is committed to, will be the continued support and encouragement of our member churches to increase their stewardship efforts so that this Conference can continue to prosper and go forward in its mission.

The Finance Committee, along with Rev. Downs, has reviewed the mission and goals for 1997 and 1998 that have been placed before us as a conference. Rev. Downs has brought a new vision to our conference. The Board of Directors and the Finance Committee are prayerfully optimistic that our goals can be reached. Our task will not be easy without the continued gracious support from our member churches. I am reminded by the word of the prophet Isaiah, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." It is the *renewed* strength under the leadership of Rev. Downs that will continue to move the Southeast Conference U.C.C. into the 21st century.

In closing, I'd like to thank Adrienne Laraway, Dave Speno, Don Harmon and Rev. Downs for enduring the early hour of our regular monthly meetings. It is through the efforts of these fine people that have made my task as Finance chair less difficult. I would be amiss if I did not also thank Nan Wright for her hard work and effort during this past year.

Steven F. Parker, Chair

SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE UCC BUDGET 1997, 1998

Account Name	1997 Proposed	1997 Revised	1998 Proposed
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INCOME

OCWM Support	165,000	200,666	228,437
Church Development	20,000	1,200	1,200
Investment Income	28,000	25,000	25,000
Annual Meeting	20,000	20,000	20,000
Reimbursement	0		
Association Special Support	5,000	10,000	16,000
UCBHM/Staff Support	0	10,000	20,000
Miscellaneous	3,000	500	500
Total Income	241,000	267,366	311,137

EXPENSES**Missions Beyond the Conference**

OCWM National	16,000	17,500	20,000
General Synod	1,000	2,500	500
Conference Minister Council	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total	18,000	21,000	21,500

Missions Within the Conference

Church Development	100	1,200	1,200
Resource Materials	600	900	900
SE News/Packets	4,000	4,000	4,000
Annual Meeting	1,000	20,000	20,000
Staff Travel	10,000	10,000	20,000
Continuing Education/Staff Development	1,500	1,500	
Other	6,500	13,000	
Total	15,700	44,100	60,600

Commissions

Church & Ministry	500	500	500
Social Justice	500	500	500
Christian Education	300	1,000	1,000
Outreach/Stewardship	400	250	250
Church Development	300	500	500
Women	500	500	500
Program Fund	1,700	500	500
Church Projects	20,000	750	750
TOTAL	24,200	4,500	4,500

Conference, Organizations, Operations

Board of Directors	4,000	6,000	6,000
Executive Committee	100	100	100
Personnel Committee	600	1,000	1,000
Finance Committee	200	150	150
Nominating Committee	200	150	150

Annual Meeting	750	500	500
Search Process	2,500	1,000	1,000
Total	8,350	8,900	8,900

Office Operation

Rent	9,000	9,800	10,094
Telephone	9,400	8,900	9,167
Office Supplies	3,000	3,000	3,754
Postage	4,000	4,000	4,120
Equipment Lease	0		
Equipment Maintenance	2,000	2,000	2,060
Auditors	7,000	3,000	3,090
Dues & Fees	300	300	309
Workers' Compensation	900	900	927
Liability Insurance	1,300	1,300	1,339
Total	36,900	33,200	34,860

Personnel	137,000	152,316	177,277
Miscellaneous	850	3,350	3,500

Total Expenses	241,000	267,366	311,137
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OCWM Giving

Alabama-Tennessee Association

<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>1/1-3/31/97</u>	<u>1997 OCWM</u>	<u>1996 OCWM</u>
Alpine, King's Chapel	192.50	192.50	380.00
Athens, Trinity Congregational	0.00	0.00	300.00
Belvidere, 1st United Church	0.00	0.00	7,925.00
Birmingham, 1st Congregational Church	1,000.00	1,000.00	6,600.00
Birmingham, Pilgrim	950.00	950.00	5,400.00
Chattanooga, Pilgrim	2,517.50	2,517.50	14,880.00
Crossville, United Christian Church UCWF	0.00	0.00	340.00
Crossville, United Christian Church	275.00	275.00	3816.50
Cullman, St. John's	2,025.00	2,025.00	8,100.00
Deer Lodge, Congregational	300.00	300.00	1,200.00
Fairfield Glade, Community Church	925.00	925.00	3,700.00
Garden City, Congregational Christian	115.50	115.50	462.00
Hanceville, Mountain Grove	0.00	0.00	0.00
Huntsville, United Church	1,800.00	1,800.00	6,000.00
Knoxville, Church of the Savior	0.00	0.00	1,400.00
Marion, First Congregational	0.00	0.00	200.00
Montgomery, Community Congregational	0.00	0.00	2,500.00
Montgomery, First	0.00	0.00	7,600.00
Nashville, 1st United Church	1,249.97	1,249.97	5,000.04
Nashville, Brookmeade	0.00	0.00	2,392.25

Nashville, Howard	200.00	200.00	4,600.00
Pleasant Hill, Community Church	4,500.00	4,500.00	18,050.00
Sweetwater, First	0.00	0.00	250.00
Talladega, First Congregational	100.00	100.00	0.00
Tougaloo, Union UCC	0.00	0.00	0.00
Waverly, United Community Church	0.00	0.00	194.73
	16,150.47	16,150.47	97,290.52

East Alabama-West Georgia Association

<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>1/1-3/31/97</u>	<u>1997 OCWM</u>	<u>1996 OCWM</u>
Alexander City, First	0.00	0.00	0.00
Columbus, United	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dadeville, Elder	95.00	95.00	773.00
East Tallassee, Congregational Christian	0.00	0.00	395.00
LaFayette, Pleasant Grove	0.00	0.00	912.00
LaGrange, Hillside	0.00	0.00	0.00
LaGrange, United	0.00	0.00	309.00
Lanett	301.00	301.00	3,549.00
Phenix City, Russell Woods	380.00	380.00	1,140.00
Pine Mountain, Oak Grove	0.00	0.00	1,140.00
Roanoke, Antioch	0.00	0.00	570.00
Roanoke, Bethany	0.00	0.00	0.00
Roanoke, New Hope	570.00	570.00	570.00
Roanoke, North Main	0.00	0.00	950.00
Valley, Pine Forest Congregational Christian	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wadley, Corinth Christian	0.00	0.00	476.00
Woodbury, Jones Chapel	522.00	522.00	2,964.00
	1,868.00	1,868.00	13,748.00

Georgia-South Carolina Association

<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>1/1-3/31/97</u>	<u>1997 OCWM</u>	<u>1996 OCWM</u>
Atlanta, Center	0.00	0.00	175.00
Atlanta, Central	7,500.00	7,500.00	30,000.00
Atlanta, Central Congregational Women	200.00	200.00	200.00
Atlanta, First	0.00	0.00	1,727.65
Atlanta, Good Shepherd	0.00	0.00	600.00
Atlanta, Rush	0.00	0.00	0.00
Atlanta, Southwest	0.00	0.00	0.00
Beachton, Evergreen Congregational	0.00	0.00	0.00
Charleston, Circular	1,500.00	1,500.00	6,000.00
Charleston, Plymouth	0.00	0.00	1,500.00
Columbia, Covenant UCC	0.00	0.00	325.00
Demorest, Federated	0.00	0.00	236.12
GA-SC Association	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hampton, Trinity	0.00	0.00	165.00
Marietta, Amistad	0.00	0.00	0.00

Marietta, Pilgrimage	1,900.00	1,900.00	10,476.00
Midway, Congregational Church	0.00	0.00	950.00
Savannah, First	0.00	0.00	1,600.00
Thomasville, Bethany Congregational Church	0.00	0.00	0.00
	11,100.00	11,100.00	53,954.77

South Alabama-Northwest Florida Association

<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>1/1-3/31/97</u>	<u>1997 OCWM</u>	<u>1996 OCWM</u>
Andalusia, Antioch	0.00	0.00	750.00
Andalusia, First CC	0.00	0.00	605.00
Baker, Good Hope	0.00	0.00	0.00
Baker, Pyron	0.00	0.00	0.00
Brantley, Liberty Congregational	0.00	0.00	450.00
Clio, New Hope	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0.00	0.00	1,805.00

Annual Meeting Program and Agenda

“The Tree Bears The Fruit”

Friday, June 13 (all times listed are Central Time)

3:30 PM	Board of Directors meeting	
4:00	Registration and room check-in	
5:30	Dinner	
7:00-8:30	BUSINESS	
	Call to Order	<i>Annie Neal, Moderator</i>
	Acknowledgement of Churches Present	
	Roll Call	<i>Susan Ewing, Secretary</i>
	Adoption of Agenda	<i>Annie Neal</i>
	Appointment of Amenities Mover	
	Finance Committee	<i>Steven Parker, Chair</i>
	Adoption of Southeast Conference Budget	
	Restructuring Progress	<i>Timothy C. Downs, Conference Minister</i>
	Allen Retreat Center Report	
	Speak Out (<i>one minute per person; 10 minutes total</i>)	
	Nominating Committee	<i>Susan Ewing, Chair</i>
	Election	
8:30	OPENING WORSHIP	
	Dr. Charles R. (Chuck) Foster, keynoter	
	Professor of Religion & Education	
	Candler School of Theology, Emory University	

Saturday, June 14

7:30 AM	Breakfast	
8:30	Morning Worship	
9-11:30	Workshops	
	“The Inviting Word” (orientation)	<i>Ginny Nixon, leader</i>
	* “Affirming Faith” (Confirmation)	<i>Joe Hoffman, leader</i>
	Talladega College (tour, etc.)	<i>Rodney Franklin, organizer</i>
	“Created in God’s Image” (sexuality)	<i>Sally Purvis, leader</i>
	The Family (resource & support)	<i>Pat Goldberg, leader</i>
	Christian Education in the Life of the Church	<i>Chuck Foster, leader</i>
	Conversations @ Children/Worship	<i>Budd Friend-Jones, leader</i>
12:00 N	Lunch	
1:30 PM	A Service of Memorial and Recognition	
	Pastors Retiring, Clergy Ordination Anniversaries	
	Recognition of Honored Laywomen	
2:30-5:00	Workshops	
	“The Inviting Word” (orientation)	<i>Ginny Nixon, leader</i>
	** UCC Resources (overview)	<i>Joe Hoffman, leader</i>
	Talladega College (tour, etc.)	<i>Rodney Franklin, organizer</i>
	“Created in God’s Image” (sexuality)	<i>Sally Purvis, leader</i>
	The Family (resource & support)	<i>Pat Goldberg, leader</i>
	** Organizing Christian Education in the small church	<i>Lesli Brown, leader</i>
	Christian Education in the Life of the Church	<i>Chuck Foster, leader</i>
	Conversations @ Children/Worship	<i>Budd Friend-Jones, leader</i>
5:30	Dinner	
7:00	Evening Entertainment	<i>Milton Hurst, coordinator</i>
	<i>“Embracing the Musical Diversity of the Southeast Conference”</i>	

Sunday, June 15

7:30 AM	Breakfast	
9:00	Opening Prayer	
	Reconvene for Business	<i>Annie Neal</i>
	Greetings from Iowa	<i>Charlie Lord</i>
	Reports	
	Conference Minister	<i>Tim Downs</i>
	Moderator	<i>Annie Neal</i>
	Burned Churches	<i>Anne Ariail, Coordinator</i>
	Personnel Committee	<i>Holly Nelson, Chair</i>
	Acknowledge all other annual reports	
	Speak Out (1 minute per person; 10 minutes total)	

	Acknowledge retiring commission chairpersons
	Louise Sallstrom, Christian Education
	James Myers, Church & Ministry
	Ed Schneider, Church Development & Evangelism
	Dorothy Gager, Social Justice
	Bob Kurtz, Stewardship & OCWM
	Joyce Myers-Brown, Women in Church & Society
10:30	Break
10:45	Closing Worship with Communion
	The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Downs
	Conference Minister, Preaching
12:00 N	Lunch
12:45 PM	Board of Directors meeting

Nominees

All of these persons need to be voted on this year, whether they held an office last year or not. Due to our consideration of new structure, we had asked people to commit for the year '96-'97 only.

Moderator:	Dr. Annie W. Neal	'98
Vice Moderator:	Mr. Jimmy Pilkington	'98
Secretary:	Ms. Kimberly Hunt	'99
Treasurer:	Mr. David Speno	'98
At-Large Board Members:	Rev. Rodney Franklin	'99
	Rev. Elizabeth Clement	'98
	Mrs. Susan Ewing	'98
	Rev. Roy Bain	'99

Commissions:

Christian Education	Ms. Ginny Nixon, chair	'99
	Ms. Connie Moorner	'99
	Rev. William Lloyd	'98
Church and Ministry	Rev. Dan Rosemergy, chair	'99
	Rev. Larry Calbert	'99
	Ms. Jennifer Crane	'98
Church Development & Evangelism	Rev. Nancy Donny, chair	'99
	Rev. John Mingus	'99
	Mr. Terry Davis	'98
Social Justice	Rev. Ted Braun, chair	'99
	Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown	'99
	Rev. Carol Jean Miller	'98

Stewardship/OCWM	Rev. Tim Morrison, chair	'99
	Mrs. Peg Muenstermann	'99
	Mr. Dave Speno	'98
Women in Church & Society	Mrs. Trudy Braun, chair	'99
	Mrs. Nancy Sales	'99
	Ms. Kathryn Robinson	'98

Association Representatives

AL/TN	Mrs. Paula Van Natta	'98
	(vacant)	'99
EAL/WGA	Mr. Donald Harmon	'98
	Rev. Bill Lloyd	'99
GA/SC	Rev. Dr. Artis Johnson	'98
	Rev. Larry Calbert	'99
SAL/NWFL	Mr. Woody Clark	'98
	Mr. Robert Foreman	'99

Nominees

Secretary – '99

Ms. Kimberly Hunt

Kim works as the assistant to the minister at Pilgrim Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, working mainly in the area of Christian Education. She is married to the pastor of Pilgrim, the Rev. Dr. John W. Mingus, Sr., and they are expecting their first child together this July.

After three years of studying religion at the University of Pennsylvania, Kim joined the family contracting business and spent ten years as an industrial/commercial painter in Boston, Massachusetts. She enjoyed serving many years as a delegate to the Massachusetts Conference Annual Meeting and just completed a one-year term as an at-large member of the Board of Directors of the Southeast Conference, UCC.

Christian Education, Chair – '99

Mrs. Ginny Nixon

Ginny's life has been full of moves and changes. Born and raised in Oregon, she has lived in Washington, California, Oklahoma, Indiana, Germany, the Netherlands and Alabama. Currently a computer programmer and grandmother, Ginny has been a full time Mom, a high school teacher, a lobbyist, and has worn a variety of hats working overseas

for the U.S. Army. Her hobbies include gardening, counted cross-stitch, and swimming.

She will also be a workshop leader at the Annual Meeting for the orientation to the UCC curriculum "The Inviting Word." Since 1964 her REAL church home and church family has been the United Church of Huntsville. The people at United Church are the major reason Ginny and husband George returned to Huntsville after 15 years in other communities.

Social Justice, Chair – '99

Rev. Ted Braun

Ted is a retired pastor living at the Uplands Retirement Center in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee since 1992. He is a member of United Christian Church in Crossville, and serves on the steering committee of Cumberland Countians for Peace and Justice, and the Social Justice Commission of our conference. Ted edits a bi-monthly newsletter, *Grass Roots*, leads the annual UCC Cuba Study Seminar, and serves on the editorial staff of *Balaam's Courier* at each General Synod. At the 1991 General Synod, Ted was recipient of the Office for Church in Society's Just Peace Award.

Before retiring, Ted served as pastor in Carbondale, Illinois and Henderson, Kentucky; as UCC campus minister at Penn State; as Peace Corps liaison for the National Council of Churches; as Secretary for Interpretation and Publication for the United Church Board for World Ministries; as chair of the Social Concerns committees in the Illinois South and Indiana-Kentucky conferences; and as member of the Council for Christian Social Action.

Commission on Church and Ministry, Member-at-Large – '98

Rev. Jennifer L. Crane

In 1986, Jennifer's relationship with the Southeast Conference began as a Student-in-Care during her days at Vanderbilt Divinity School. She apprenticed with Brookmeade Congregational Church during her final year and her active ministry began in 1989 as a pastoral counselor. Currently involved as a supervisor of clinical material for the Nashville Veterans Administration Hospital's Clinical Pastoral Education program. Jennifer also serves as the UCC volunteer chaplain for two local hospitals.

A spirit-filled member of Brookmeade Congregational Church, Jennifer has been a Sunday School teacher, deacon, and part of the Care Team. She has served on the AL/TN Association Church Development and Evangelism Committee for two terms and is currently a member of the

Church and Ministry Committee. She is committed to community activism and currently sits on the CASA Board of Williamson County and the Interfaith Alliance Board of Middle Tennessee.

Jennifer is completing her D.Min. degree in Pastoral Theology, and raising bees! She loves traveling, reading, talking, and helping to run her fiancé's farm.

Church Development and Evangelism, Chair – '99

Rev. Nancy E. Donny

For the past 3 years, Nancy has served Covenant, United Church of Christ in South Carolina. Having been very active in UCC congregations, Nancy has also served congregations in Connecticut and New Jersey. Nancy has worked as a professional musician and teacher of gifted and talented children, while raising 4 children of her own. She is currently writing children's historical novels and an adult murder mystery.

Nancy received her M.Div. from Emory University and was ordained in March 1981 in Staffordville, Connecticut. She served as dean of the South Carolina Pastor's School in 1985 and 1986 and is working towards her Ph.D. at the University of South Carolina.

Women in Church and Society, Chair – '99

Mrs. Gertrude C. (Trudy) Braun

Trudy attended Grinnell College and earned a B.S. in Nursing from Washington University. She and her husband Dick served as medical missionaries with the United Church Board for World Ministries in Ghana from 1957 to 1978. She raised her four children there and proudly watched them return to Africa for study or service.

After returning to the States, Trudy worked as a public health nurse, and continued to serve her church at the local level, as well as at the Conference level, where she served on the Women's Commission, as chair of the Outreach Commission, and as coordinator of the Iowa-Southeast Conference Partnership. Being a member of several SEC work crews has been a particularly satisfying experience for her.

Church Development and Evangelism Member-at-Large – '99

Rev. John W. Mingus

John is the pastor of Pilgrim Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Chattanooga, TN. He and his wife Kimberly C. Hunt are leading Pilgrim Congregational in a revitalization of its life and ministry. His

previous service has included churches in Maine, Massachusetts, and Maryland.

John is a graduate of Bangor Theological Seminary in Maine, and Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. He was the organizing minister of the United Church of Christ in Seneca Valley, Germantown, Maryland. He has served as secretary for church development in the Division of Evangelism and Local Church Development of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.

Women in Church and Society, Member-at-Large – '98

Ms. Kathryn H. Robinson

Kathryn, a retired educator, continues to work, serving as church treasurer for First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Birmingham, Alabama, where she is also, a member of the Chancel Choir, and a staff member of *First News*.

Kathryn is a volunteer at Cooper Green Hospital in Birmingham. She is mother of 2 and has a granddaughter. A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Kathryn enjoys bowling in her “spare” time.

Church Development and Evangelism, Member-at-Large – '98

Mr. Terry G. Davis

Terry, a native of Alabama, has served it well. After graduating from Alabama State University, and Cumberland School of Law at Samford University in Birmingham he was employed by the Alabama Supreme Court, the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals and the law firm of Gray, Seay and Langford before opening a solo practice in 1983.

With his wife, the former Melinda J. Massey, and their 2 children, Terry is a member of the Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Montgomery. There is a deacon and moderator. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Montgomery Area United Way, Leadership Montgomery, and is president of the Capitol City Bar Association.

Women in Society, Member-at-Large – '99

Mrs. Nancy Sales

Nancy, a former missionary with UCBWM in Zambia and Botswana, is currently a member of Pilgrim Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, where she sings in the choir.

Nancy is employed as a teacher in the Adult Learning Center, Birmingham, Alabama, where she teaches adult basic literacy students, and teenage Pre-GED students.

Church and Ministry, Chair – '99

Rev. Dr. Daniel Rosemergy

Dan is a member of the 1992 Leadership Nashville class, and currently serves as co-chair for the newly formed Interfaith Alliance of Middle Tennessee; and is a religious spokesperson for CDC Preventive Marketing Initiative (HIV prevention program).

At the Conference level Dan served on the Southeast Conference Board of Directors (1985-89), and was a member of the Conference Structure Committee (1994-95).

At the association level Dan held the position of moderator of the Alabama-Tennessee Association (1985-87) and recently completed six years as a member of the Alabama-Tennessee Association Church and Ministry Committee (serving for five years as its chair).

Christian Education, Member-at-Large – '99

Mrs. Constance P. Moorer

Connie works as a part-time reading instructor at Lawson State Community College, while working part-time for the Testing Department of the Birmingham Board of Education. She has both a Bachelor and a Master degree in Elementary Education and a Certificate of Advanced Degree in Education/Supervision.

Connie is a member of First Congregational Church, Birmingham, Alabama and sings on the Chancel Choir, while serving as co-chair of the Board of Christian Education, vice-president of the Angola Guild, director of Vacation Bible School, as well as chair, SEC Annual Meeting Planning Committee.

Around the Conference

Churches in Search:

For Associate Pastor:

St. John's United, Cullman.

For Pastor:

Congregational Morgan County Parish, Deer Lodge.

Trinity United, Hampton.

United Congregational Christian, LaGrange.

First Congregational, Marion.
First Congregational Christian, Montgomery.
Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain.
North Main, Roanoke.
United Community, Waverly.

Installations:

Vant Hardaway, First United Church of Christ, Sweetwater, April 13

Ordinations (coming up):

Barry Mick, Trinity United Church, Hampton, May 11, 5:00 p.m.
Association Ordination: Arthur Dailey, Congregational Christian Church, Lanett, April 27, 3:00 p.m.

Prayers and Concerns:

Please continue your prayers for Joe Brown in Florida.

Our hearts go out to:

Wayde Washburn and his wife Suzanne Tew-Washburn on the death of Suzanne's sister, Becky Campbell, last week. We hold them in our prayers.

Also to Ted and Donna Braun and Dick and Trudy Braun as they remember and celebrate the life of their mother, Viola C. Braun, widow of the Rev. Dr. Theodore Braun, who died April 3, 1997, at the age of 97. Viola Braun was married to the Rev. Dr. Theodore (Theo) Braun and was very active in the life of the United Church of Christ, from the Evangelical Church, Evangelical and Reformed, then on to the union of E&R and the Congregational Christian Churches, and finally, in 1957, the "birthing" of the United Church of Christ. She lived through a good deal of the recent history of our church.

Alabama-Tennessee Easterfest:

A Joyous Celebration

by Dick Sales

Don't ask me why I should be the one to write this. I just went along. Saturday the 19th of April to the United Church of Huntsville for the ride and had a marvelous time, together with at least a hundred other folk from

churches ranging from Knoxville to Nashville, and from Chattanooga to, well, Birmingham, if you ask.

The outline of the day was simple yet profoundly valuable. Easterfest was intended to be a feast for the spirit. We began with rousing songs led by Dan Rosemergy and Jim Walker, minister of music at St. John's, Cullman. Then we were divided into seven groups, children, youth and five different adult groups, for a morning seminar smorgasbord.

After a catered lunch, we gathered to hear Dr. David Buttrick of Vanderbilt, with his inspiring message on the hope of Easter, preach and those from a dozen church choirs sing, led by Milton Hurst. We finished the day with communion. It doesn't sound nearly as good as it was, because there were so many good friendly folk around that the simple program opened the door to much conversation.

As our host, Jim Norris, noted, when he'd been asked by Ed Schneider, moderator of AL/TN, to host the Easterfest, he said, not if it would only attract a handful of folk. But, Jim went on, "Now, I would like to suggest that this is the First Annual Easterfest." So say we all.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

May

4 Sun	Tim preaches in Covenant UCC, Columbia, SC
5-7 M-W	Tim off to Cleveland, Council of Conference Ministers
11 Sun	Ordination of Barry Micks, Trinity United, Hampton, GA, 5:00 p.m.
15 Thu	Retreat Center Committee, Pleasant Grove, 12 noon (CT)
16 Fri	Board of Directors meeting, Uplands Retirement Village, TN, 12 noon (CT)
17 Sat	GA/SC Executive Council meeting, Atlanta, GA, 9:30 a.m.
18 Sun	Tim preaches in First Congregational, Birmingham, AL
23 Fri	Annual Meeting Planning, Birmingham, AL, 3:00 p.m. (CT)
24 Sat	GA/SC Church & Ministry Committee, 8:30 a.m. <i>Tim preaches at Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, SE Synod Annual Assembly, 11 a.m.</i>
26 Mon	Memorial Day – OFFICE CLOSED

June

1 Sun	Tim preaches in United Community Church, Waverly, TN
5 Thu	Church leaders meeting, Garden City, AL, 7:00 p.m. (CT)
7 Sat	General Synod XXI training for delegates, Huntsville, AL, 10:30 a.m. (CT)
8 Sun	Tim preaches in Community Congregational, Montgomery, AL
13 Fri	Board of Directors meeting, Shocco Springs, AL, 3:30 p.m. (CT)
13-15 F-Sun	Southeast Conference Annual Meeting, Shocco Springs, AL (CT)
29 Sun	Tim preaches in Congregational, Midway, GA, 11:00 a.m.

July

2, 3 W-Th Tim off to Columbus, OH, Council of Conference Ministers
4 Fri Independence Day – OFFICE CLOSED
4-8 F-W General Synod XXI, Columbus, OH
9 Wed UCC Executive Committee meeting, Columbus, OH
20 Sun Tim preaches in Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain, GA
23 thru 8/11 Tim on vacation

August

9-10 Sa-Su Homecoming of First United Church, Belvidere, TN
12 Tue Tim returns from vacation
16 Sat GA/SC Association Retreat (to be confirmed)
24 Sun Tim preaches in Congregational Christian, Lanett, AL
29 Fri Board of Directors retreat, Atlanta, GA, 6:00 p.m.
31 Tim preaches in Congregational Christian, Garden City, AL

September

1 Mon Labor Day – OFFICE CLOSED
5-6 F-Sat AL/TN Annual Meeting – First Congregational Christian, Birmingham, AL
12-13 F-Sat GA/SC Annual Meeting – Congregational, Midway, GA
16-18 Tu-Th Orientation for conference ministers, Eden Seminary
21 Sun First Congregational, Atlanta, Homecoming, 130th Anniversary
26-28 F-Sun Southern Region Women's Retreat, Blowing Rock

October

4 Sat SAL/NWFL Annual Meeting – Antioch Congregational, Andalusia, AL
5 Sun Tim preaches in Antioch Congregational, Andalusia, AL
11 Sat Christian Education Commission meeting (to be confirmed)
12 Sun Tim preaches in St. John's United, Cullman, AL
18 Sat EAL/WGA Annual Meeting – United Congregational Christian, LaGrange, GA
19 Sun Tim preaches in Church of the Savior, Knoxville, TN

THE SOUTHEAST NEWS

Published by the Southeast Conference
United Church of Christ

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Vice Moderator, Jimmy Pilkington

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Treasurer, David Speno
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The preceding was a transcription from the original publication, except for photographs and associated captions, an advertisement for the UCC Southern Regional Women's Meeting on page 5, a registration form for the Conference Annual Meeting on page 8, driving directions to Shocco Springs Conference Center on page 9, registration forms for the youth and musical programs of the Conference Annual Meeting on page 10, and an advertisement for a travel seminar to South India on page 12. Neither the original nor the transcription are copyrighted or have rights reserved; they are in the public domain for free use. Copies of the original may be obtained from the Congregational Library, Boston, Massachusetts.

This transcription was recorded on October 31 and November 1 and 2, 2013 by Mike Stroud, director of Project 66-16, an initiative to record, compile and write the history of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.

PROJECT

